

REMARKS

The indication of allowable subject matter in claim 14 is acknowledged and appreciated. For the following reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 9, 12 and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Ball, and claims 1-6, 11, 22 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Ball in view of Inoue et al.. These rejections are respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

Ball has a U.S. filing date of April 28, 2000. The present application claims foreign priority based on JP 2000-34707 filed on February 14, 2000. A certified English translation of the foreign priority document is enclosed herein to perfect Applicants' claim to foreign priority. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Ball is not prior art to the present application.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1-6, 9, 11-13, 22 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103, be withdrawn. In addition, it is respectfully requested that non-elected claims 7, 8 and 15-21 be rejoined as being dependent on novel generic claims.

CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an

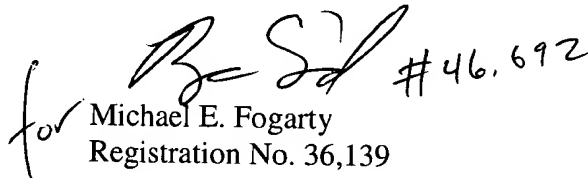
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interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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